



CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Better Strategic and Risk Management Tools Needed to Guide DOD's Stockpile Destruction Program

Highlights of [GAO-04-221T](#), a testimony to the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Since its inception in 1985, the Chemical Demilitarization (Chem-Demil) Program has been charged with destroying the nation's large chemical weapons stockpile. After years of planning and building new facilities, the program started destroying the stockpile in 1990. As of October 2003, the program had destroyed 26 percent of the 31,500-ton agent stockpile, and its total estimated cost to destroy the entire stockpile is more than \$25 billion.

This testimony summarizes GAO's September 2003 report and addresses the following issues: (1) the status of schedule milestones and cost estimates, (2) the impact of the current schedule on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) deadlines, (3) the challenges associated with managing the program, and (4) the status of the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP).

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommended in its September 2003 report that the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Army develop an overall strategy and implementation plan for the program and implement a risk management approach, and DOD concurred.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-221T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Henry L. Hinton, Jr. at (202) 512-4300 or hintonh@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

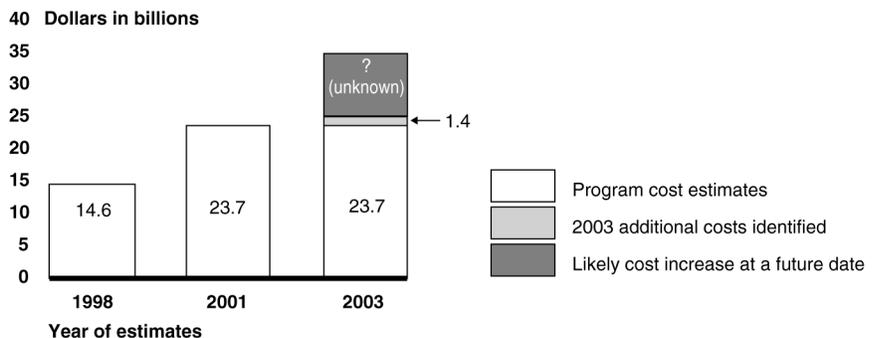
The Chem-Demil Program faces schedule delays and higher costs, but it has improved emergency preparedness in communities near the sites. In 2001, the Chem-Demil Program extended its schedule milestones and increased its cost estimates from \$15 billion to about \$24 billion. Since then nearly all sites have experienced delays, stemming from problems such as: plant safety issues, environmental requirements, approving emergency preparedness plans, and funding shortfalls. The program needs a risk management plan to mitigate problems affecting program schedules, costs, and safety. Program officials say the delays have raised the cost estimates by an additional \$1.4 billion, to more than \$25 billion as of September 2003. Based on current schedule slippages, GAO believes that costs will grow higher and further delays will occur. (See figure.)

Because of schedule delays, the United States will not meet CWC's April 2004 deadline to destroy 45 percent of the stockpile and it risks not meeting the original 2007 deadline to complete destruction of the entire stockpile. Unless the program fixes the problems causing delays, the United States also risks not meeting CWC's deadline of 2012, if extended.

The program has suffered from several long-standing management and organizational issues. The lack of sustained leadership has undercut decision-making authority and obscured accountability. The program's complex structure, with multiple lines of authority, has left roles and responsibilities unclear. It does not have an overarching, comprehensive strategy to guide and integrate its activities and monitor its performance.

The Army and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have helped state and local communities become better prepared to respond to chemical emergencies. Despite these gains, CSEPP costs are rising because some states have expanded their preparedness requests beyond the approved budgets. These requests amount to \$88 million for fiscal years 2004 and 2005.

Comparison of 1998, 2001, and 2003 Cumulative Program Cost Estimates



Source: DOD.